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# FABLES



Mar 06

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# ACT OF WAR

## Chapter FOUR of Arabian Nights (and Days)

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THE SCREAMING ISN'T SO BAD, KING COLE. IT'S THE PROLONGED MOMENTS OF **WHIMPERING** THAT BOTHER ME MOST.

YOU'VE BEEN HERE ALL THIS TIME WITHOUT SLEEP?

WHEN YOU GET TO BE **MY** AGE, PRINCE CHARMING, YOU'LL FIND YOU DON'T **NEED** MUCH SLEEP. AND I'VE STOLEN A CATNAP OR TWO IN MY COMFY ROCKER.

BUT I'M DETERMINED TO PERSONALLY SEE THE LAST WISH FULFILLED.

I INTEND TO BE HERE AS SOON AS THE D'JINN IS FINISHED WITH HIS GRUESOME WORK INSIDE TO MAKE SURE HE RETIRES SAFELY BACK INSIDE HIS BOTTLE.

WHY LET IT GO ON THEN? WHY NOT JUST **COMMAND** THE MONSTER TO MAKE AN END OF IT?

THE WISHES HAVE ALREADY BEEN **CAST**, DEAR BOY. THEY CAN'T BE ALTERED NOW.

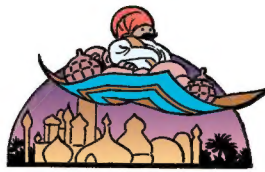
THEN WHY DID YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE **SECOND** ONE SO--SO LINGERING? THIS IS **DEPRAVED!**

IT WASN'T **MY** DESIRE, IT WAS YUSUF'S.

"MY SPELL COULD ONLY ALTER HIS WORDS SO FAR, WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF WHAT HE'D ACTUALLY WISH ON HIS ENEMY."

MY **SECOND** WISH IS THIS: YOU WILL RETURN HERE AND SLAY SINBAD, PRINCE CHARMING, KING COLE AND ANY OTHER SOUL WHOSE NAME APPEARS ON THE LIST. **MY SECOND** WILL PREPARE WISH IS THIS: YOU WILL RETURN HERE AND SLAY ME IN A MOST PROLONGED AND AGONIZING FASHION.





MY THIRD WISH IS THIS: YOU WILL THEREUPON IMMEDIATELY RETURN TO YOUR BOTTLE-- SEALING YOURSELF INSIDE AGAIN.

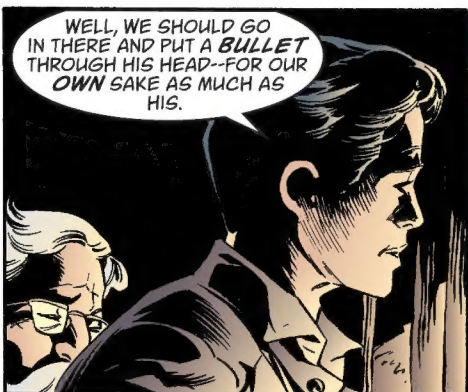
ARE YOU CERTAIN THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT DONE, MASTER?

HAVEN'T I *COMMANDED* IT SO?

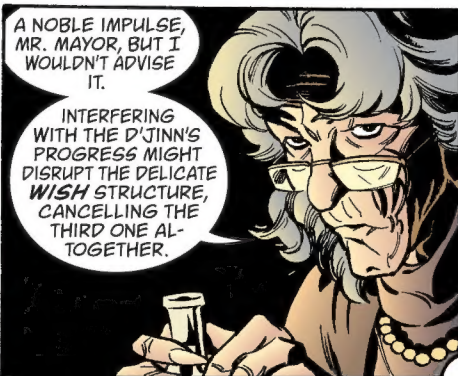


ANY *DEPRAVITIES* POOR MINISTER YUSUF SUFFERS ARE OF HIS *OWN* DESIGN.

PLEASE! I *BEG* OF YOU! NOT THE... *AIII- IIEEEEE!*

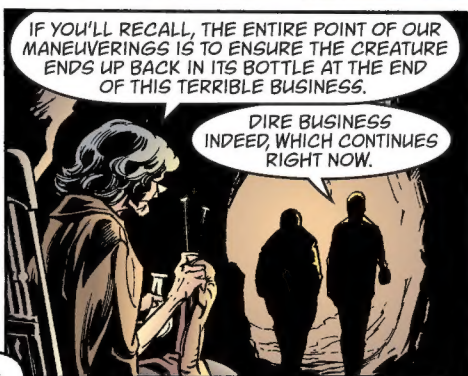


WELL, WE SHOULD GO IN THERE AND PUT A *BULLET* THROUGH HIS HEAD--FOR OUR *OWN* SAKE AS MUCH AS HIS.



A NOBLE IMPULSE, MR. MAYOR, BUT I WOULDN'T ADVISE IT.

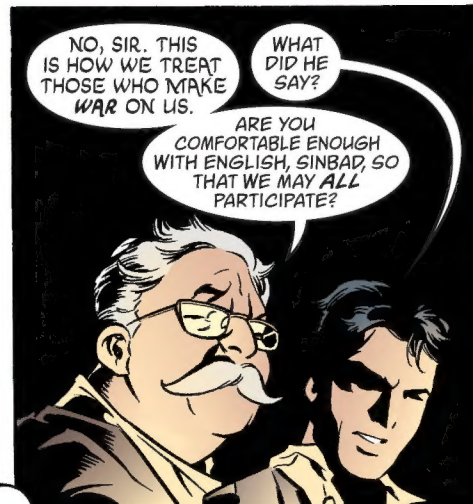
INTERFERING WITH THE D'JINN'S PROGRESS MIGHT DISRUPT THE DELICATE *WISH* STRUCTURE, CANCELLING THE THIRD ONE ALTOGETHER.



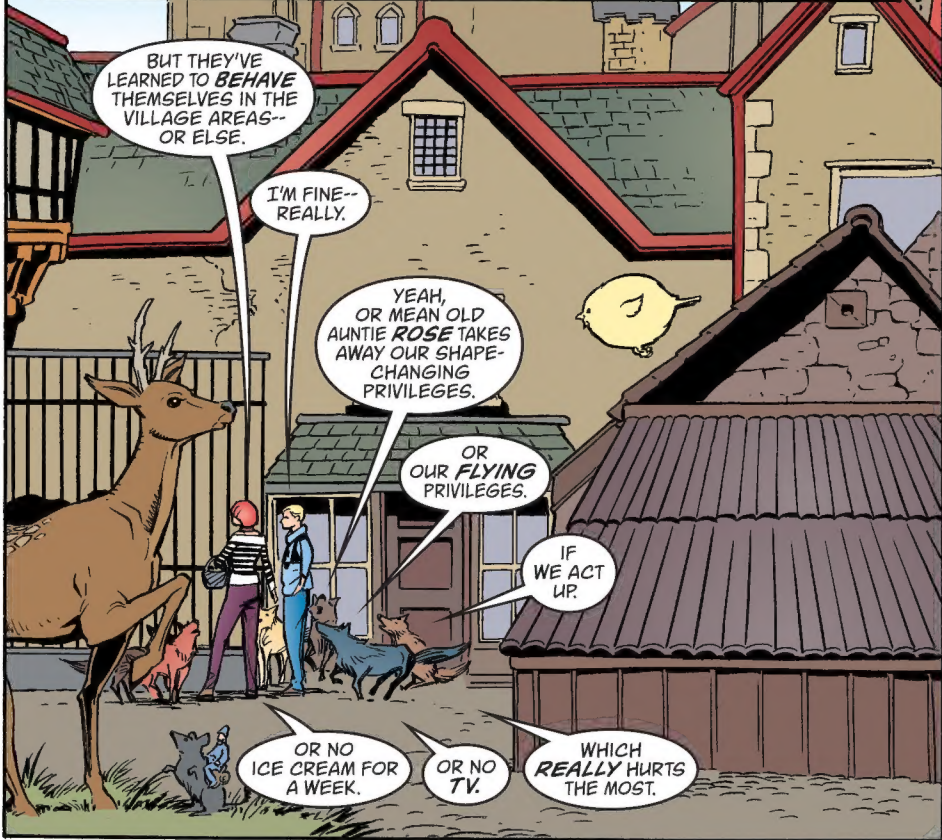
IF YOU'LL RECALL, THE ENTIRE POINT OF OUR MANUEVRINGS IS TO ENSURE THE CREATURE ENDS UP BACK IN ITS BOTTLE AT THE END OF THIS TERRIBLE BUSINESS.

DIRE BUSINESS INDEED, WHICH CONTINUES RIGHT NOW.

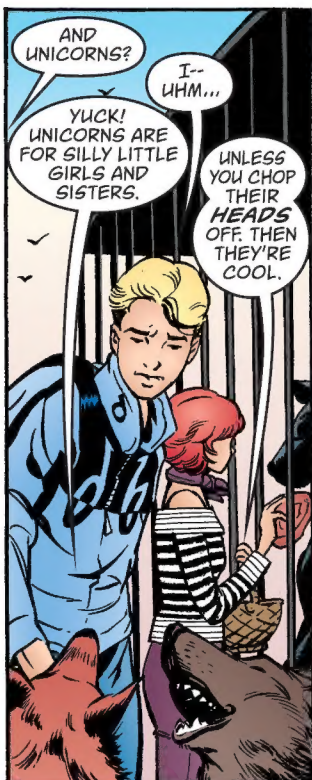










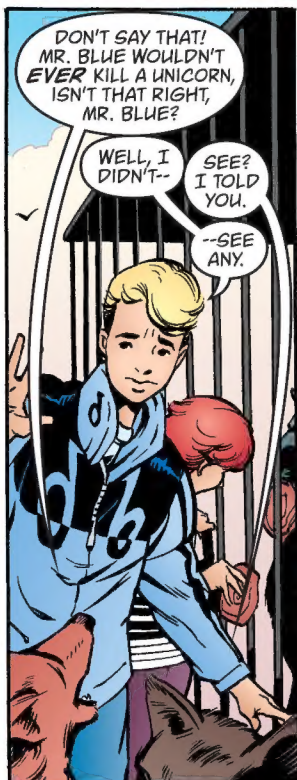


AND UNICORNS?

I-- UHM...

YUCK! UNICORNS ARE FOR SILLY LITTLE GIRLS AND SISTERS.

UNLESS YOU CHOP THEIR HEADS OFF. THEN THEY'RE COOL.

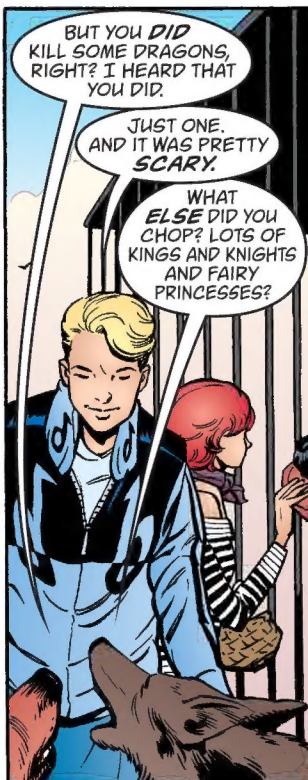


DON'T SAY THAT! MR. BLUE WOULDN'T EVER KILL A UNICORN, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MR. BLUE?

WELL, I DIDN'T--

SEE? I TOLD YOU.

--SEE ANY.



BUT YOU DID KILL SOME DRAGONS, RIGHT? I HEARD THAT YOU DID.

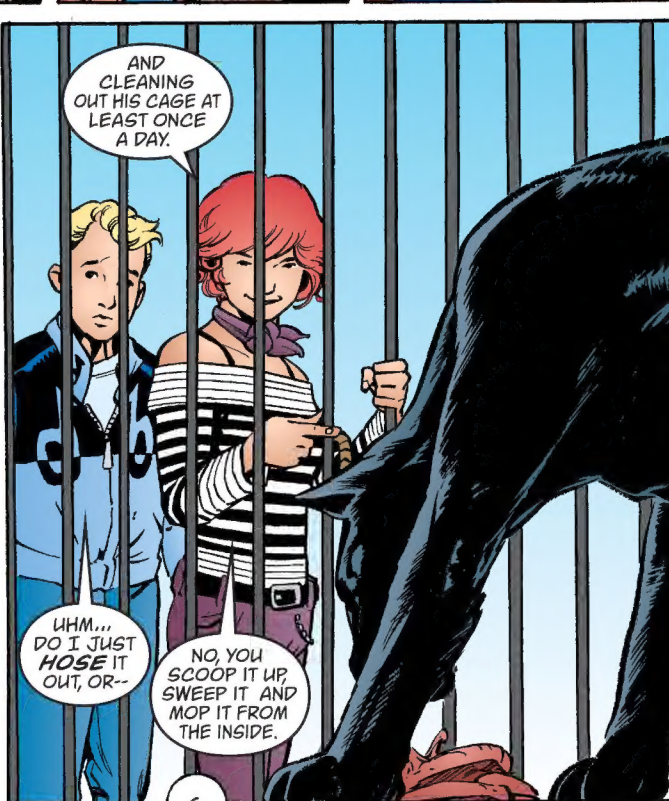
JUST ONE. AND IT WAS PRETTY SCARY.

WHAT ELSE DID YOU CHOP? LOTS OF KINGS AND KNIGHTS AND FAIRY PRINCESSES?



ENOUGH OF THAT KIND OF TALK, YOU RUFFIANS.

THIS WILL BE ONE OF YOUR DUTIES, BOY BLUE. FEEDING BAGHEERA TWICE A DAY, AND MAKING SURE HIS WATER DISH IS ALWAYS FULL.



AND CLEANING OUT HIS CAGE AT LEAST ONCE A DAY.

UHM... DO I JUST HOSE IT OUT, OR--

NO, YOU SCOOP IT UP, SWEEP IT AND MOP IT FROM THE INSIDE.





DON'T WORRY. BAGHEERA WON'T **EAT** YOU.

YOU WON'T EAT BOY BLUE, **WILL** YOU, BAGHEERA?

NOT AS LONG AS THE FAT, JUICY **BEEF-STEAKS** KEEP COMING.

**BREATHE**, BOY BLUE. BREATHE.

BAGHEERA WAS JUST **KIDDING** YOU. **TELL** HIM YOU WERE JUST KIDDING, BAGGY.

I'M **FAIRLY** CONFIDENT I WAS JUST KIDDING.

UNLESS I'M ONLY REPEATING WHAT MY EVIL **JAILOR** FORCES ME TO SAY.

STOP SCARING THE **NEW** GUY. YOU'RE WORSE THAN THE **CUBS!** HAVE YOU HEARD FROM MOWGLI SINCE HIS VISIT? ANY WORD ON WHEN HE HOPES TO SPRING YOU?

ONLY THAT HE HAD TO GO ON SOME SECRET MISSION THAT WILL PURPORTEDLY EARN MY FREEDOM.

WELL, HANG IN THERE, OLD MAN. MOWGLI WILL COME THROUGH.

OF COURSE HE WILL. MOWGLI WAS RAISED BY WOLVES.

WOLVES KNOW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE.





ROSE RED?

HHMMM?

I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND **UNGRATEFUL**, BUT ALL OF THESE NEW DUTIES YOU'RE GIVING ME--



TOO MUCH?

NO, MA'AM. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY'RE NOT VERY DIFFICULT AT ALL.

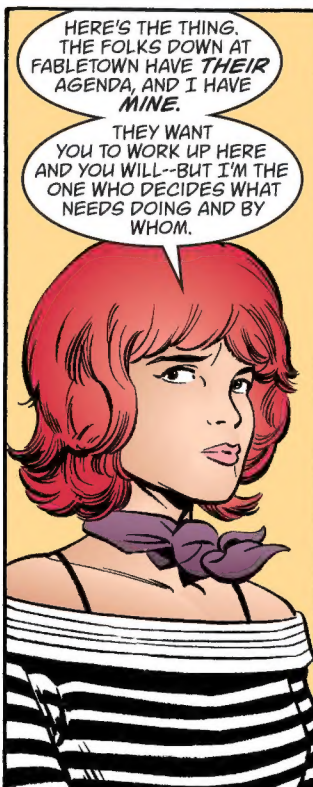
BUT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE DOING **HARD LABOR** UP HERE.



OKAY, MAYBE WE BETTER TALK ABOUT THAT.

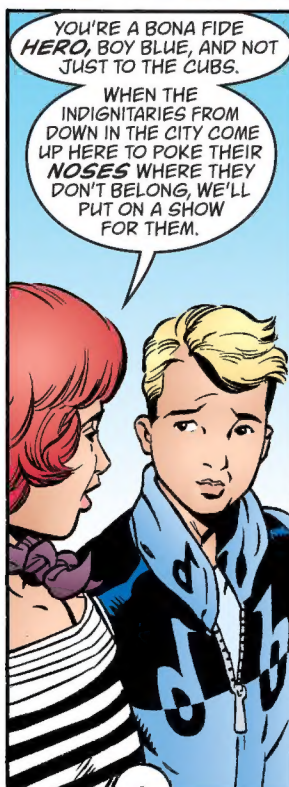
**SCATTER**, YOU BEASTS! THIS IS GROWN-UP TALK!

YES, AUNTIE ROSE.



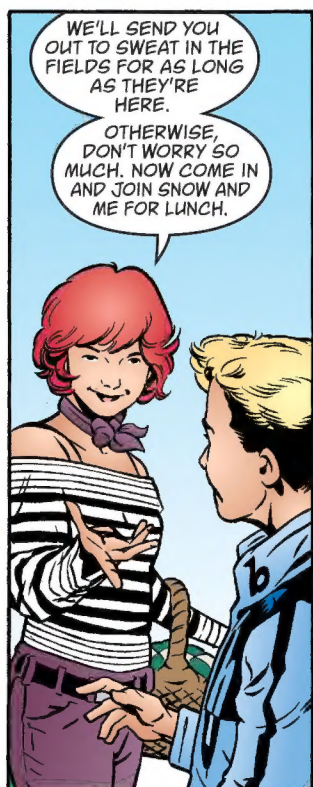
HERE'S THE THING. THE FOLKS DOWN AT FABLETOWN HAVE **THEIR** AGENDA, AND I HAVE **MINE**.

THEY WANT YOU TO WORK UP HERE AND YOU WILL--BUT I'M THE ONE WHO DECIDES WHAT NEEDS DOING AND BY WHOM.



YOU'RE A BONA FIDE **HERO**, BOY BLUE, AND NOT JUST TO THE CUBS.

WHEN THE INDIGNITARIES FROM DOWN IN THE CITY COME UP HERE TO POKE THEIR **NOSES** WHERE THEY DON'T BELONG, WE'LL PUT ON A SHOW FOR THEM.



WE'LL SEND YOU OUT TO SWEAT IN THE FIELDS FOR AS LONG AS THEY'RE HERE.

OTHERWISE, DON'T WORRY SO MUCH. NOW COME IN AND JOIN SNOW AND ME FOR LUNCH.





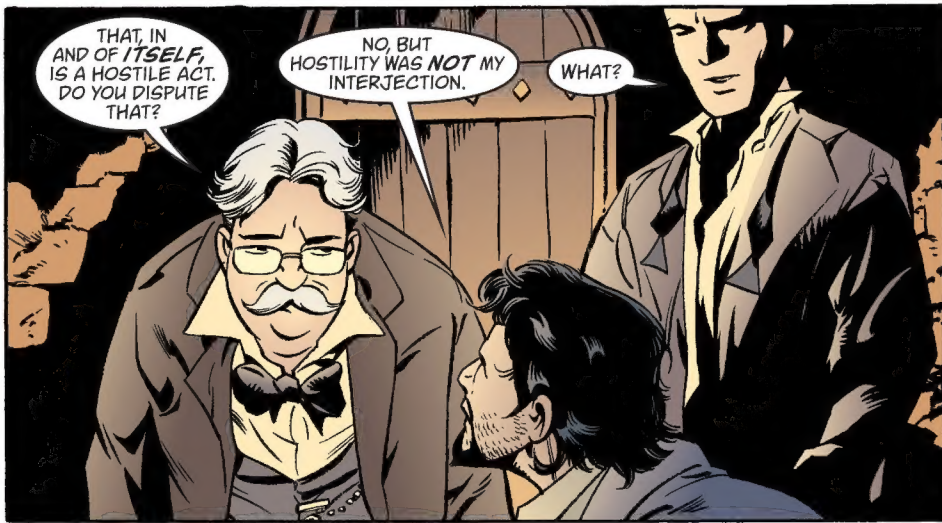
WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT YUSUF RELEASED THE MONSTER ENTIRELY ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE.



YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.

AND *STILL* YOU KEEP ME HERE?

BECAUSE WE ALSO KNOW THAT YOU WERE A WILLING PARTICIPANT IN BRINGING THE D'JINN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.



THAT, IN AND OF *ITSELF*, IS A HOSTILE ACT. DO YOU DISPUTE THAT?

NO, BUT HOSTILITY WAS *NOT* MY INTERJECTION.

WHAT?



I THINK HE MEANT *INTENTION*.

OH, OF COURSE.

SO, KING COLE, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVING ME INTO TRIAL?



THIS IS YOUR TRIAL RIGHT NOW, AMBASSADOR SINBAD.

I'M YOUR ACCUSER AND PRINCE CHARMING IS YOUR JUDGE.

OH.





DUE TO THE REMARKABLE POWERS OF A FABLE NAMED KAY, WE ALREADY **KNOW** THE FACTS OF THIS CASE.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO DETERMINE IF THERE ARE ANY MATTERS OF EXTENUATION OR MITIGATION.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

IS THERE ANY **EXCUSE** FOR WHAT YOU DID? WHY DID YOU BRING THE D'JINN WITH YOU?

FOR MANY REASONS. FIRST, IT IS OUR MOST POWERFUL REMAINING WEAPON AGAINST THE INCURSIONS OF THE ADVERSARY.

SO WE DETERMINED TO KEEP IT ALWAYS FAR AWAY FROM HIM AND HIS FORCES...

...UNTIL WE COULD AGREE ON THE BEST USE TO MAKE OF IT.

I WAS GIVEN THE CHARGE OF KEEPING IT. SO, WHEN I WAS DISPATCHED TO COME HERE, NATURALLY THE VESSEL MUST COME WITH ME.

HEY.

BUT YOU DIDN'T KEEP IT IN A SECURE PLACE. YOU LEFT IT SITTING OUT ON YOUR TABLE, WHERE ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD COULD GET AT IT.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ENGLISH?

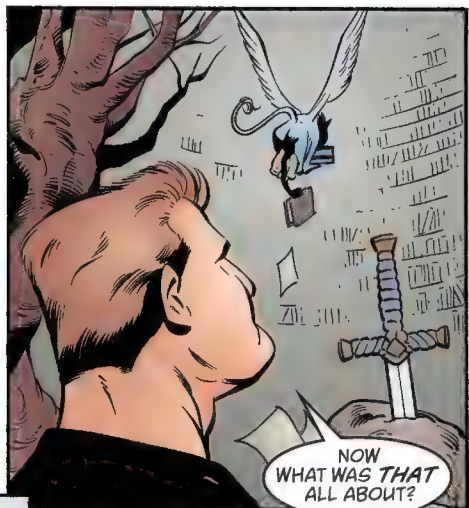
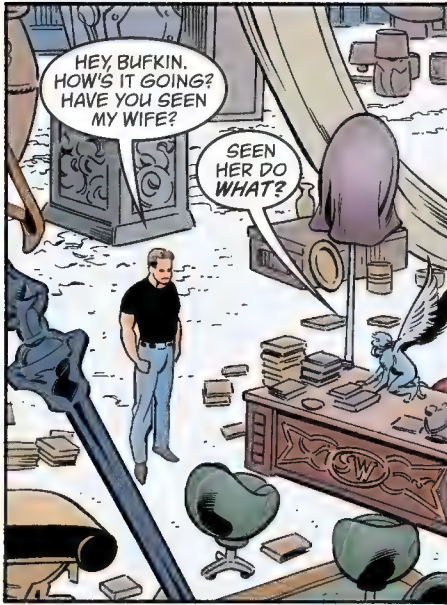
WELL, MY SLAVES WOULDN'T TOUCH IT BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEIR PLACE.

AND YUSUF? THOUGH HE WAS EVER THE CRANKY CONTRARIAN, I THOUGHT HE WAS ULTIMATELY **LOYAL**.













THE SENTENCE FOR EVEN AN UNINTENDED ACT OF WAR IS **DEATH.**

BUT, CONSIDERING THE EXTENUATING *CIRCUMSTANCES*, THAT SENTENCE IS COMMUTED DOWN TO A LIFETIME BANISHMENT FROM FABLETOWN.

I CAN NEVER COMING BACK HERE AGAIN?

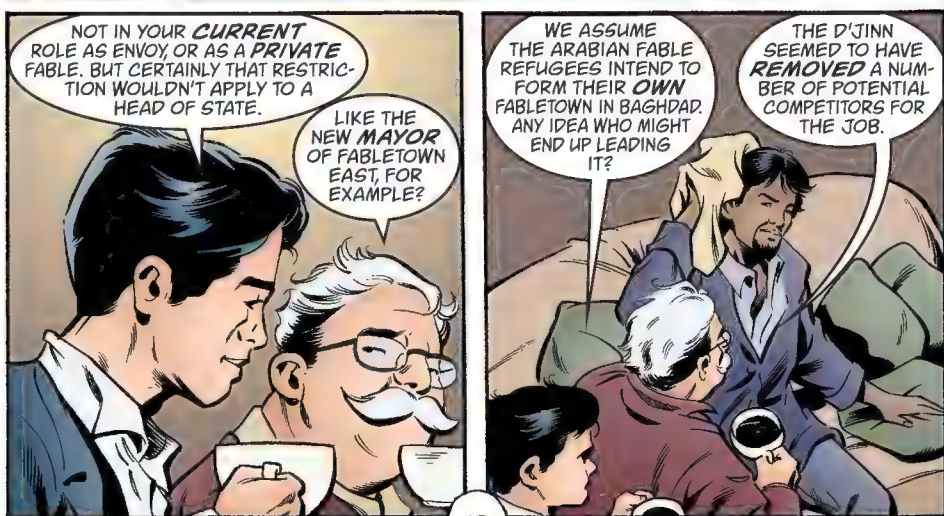


NOT IN YOUR *CURRENT* ROLE AS ENVOY, OR AS A *PRIVATE* FABLE. BUT CERTAINLY THAT RESTRICTION WOULDN'T APPLY TO A HEAD OF STATE.

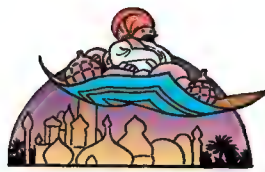
LIKE THE NEW *MAYOR* OF FABLETOWN EAST, FOR EXAMPLE?

WE ASSUME THE ARABIAN FABLE REFUGEES INTEND TO FORM THEIR *OWN* FABLETOWN IN BAGHDAD. ANY IDEA WHO MIGHT END UP LEADING IT?

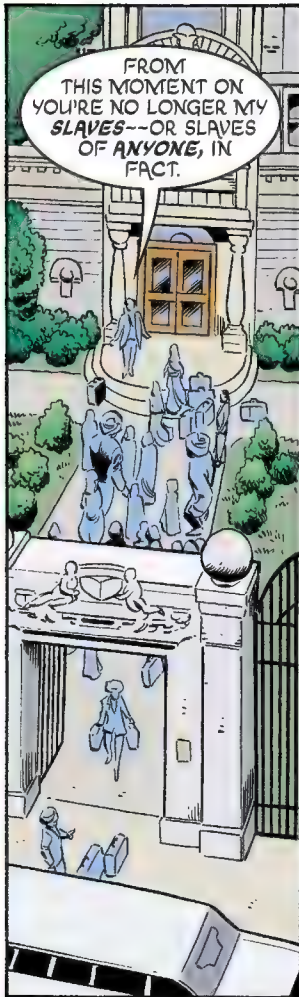
THE D'JINN SEEMED TO HAVE *REMOVED* A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL COMPETITORS FOR THE JOB.











FROM THIS MOMENT ON YOU'RE NO LONGER MY SLAVES--OR SLAVES OF ANYONE, IN FACT.



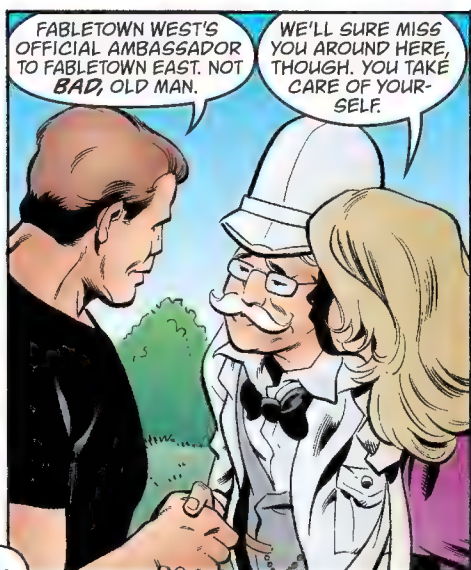
AND NOW YOU EACH HAVE YOUR FIRST IMPORTANT DECISION TO MAKE. YOU CAN ACCOMPANY ME BACK TO BAGHDAD AS FREE FABLES.

OR YOU'VE ALL BEEN INVITED TO REMAIN HERE AS NEWLY EMANCIPATED CITIZENS OF FABLETOWN.



ARE YOU ALL PACKED, KING COLE?

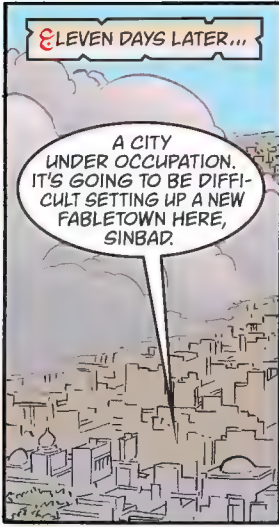
I THINK SO. I HOPE I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ANYTHING IMPORTANT.



FABLETOWN WEST'S OFFICIAL AMBASSADOR TO FABLETOWN EAST. NOT **BAD**, OLD MAN.

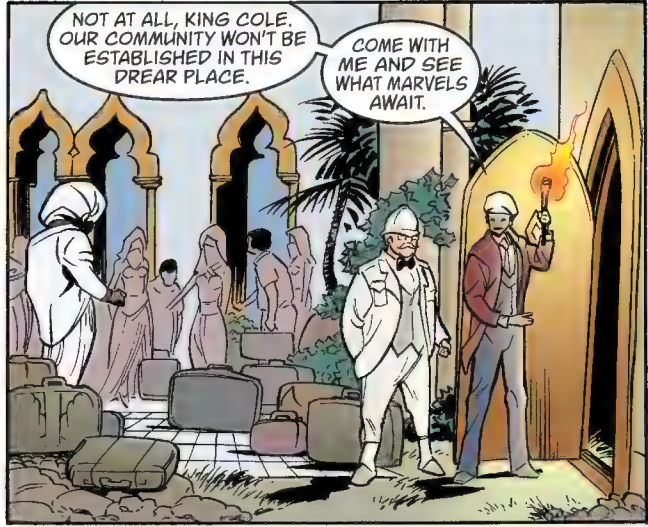
WE'LL SURE MISS YOU AROUND HERE, THOUGH. YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.





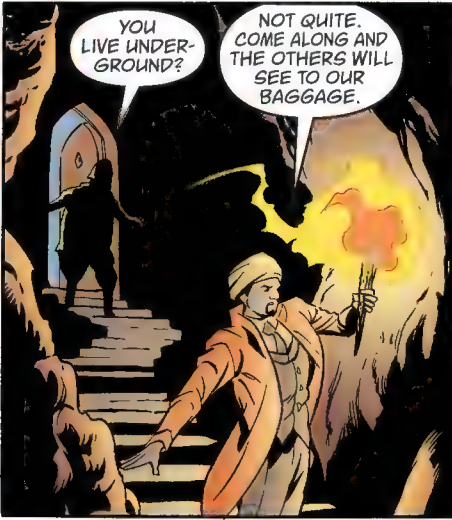
ELEVEN DAYS LATER...

A CITY UNDER OCCUPATION. IT'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT SETTING UP A NEW FABLETOWN HERE, SINBAD.



NOT AT ALL, KING COLE. OUR COMMUNITY WON'T BE ESTABLISHED IN THIS DREAR PLACE.

COME WITH ME AND SEE WHAT MARVELS AWAIT.



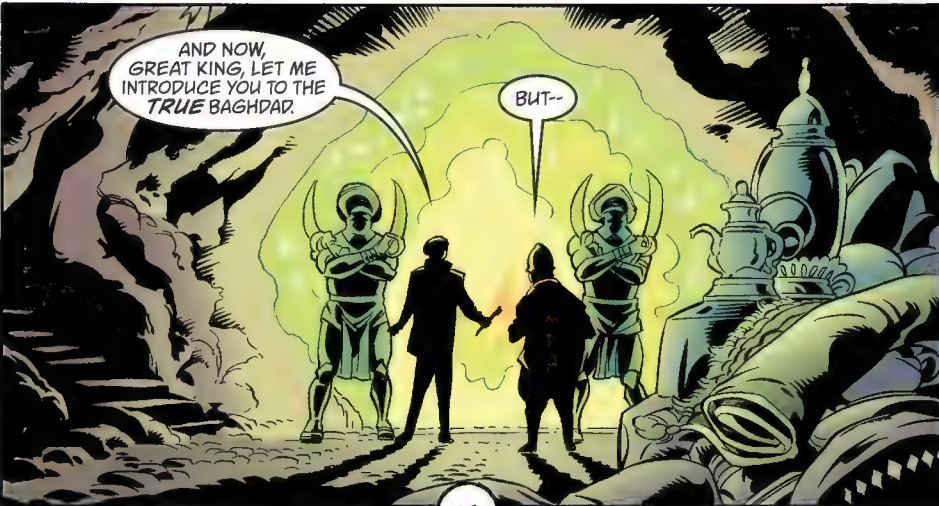
YOU LIVE UNDERGROUND?

NOT QUITE. COME ALONG AND THE OTHERS WILL SEE TO OUR BAGGAGE.



CAREFUL NOW. THE STAIRS GET TRICKY HERE.

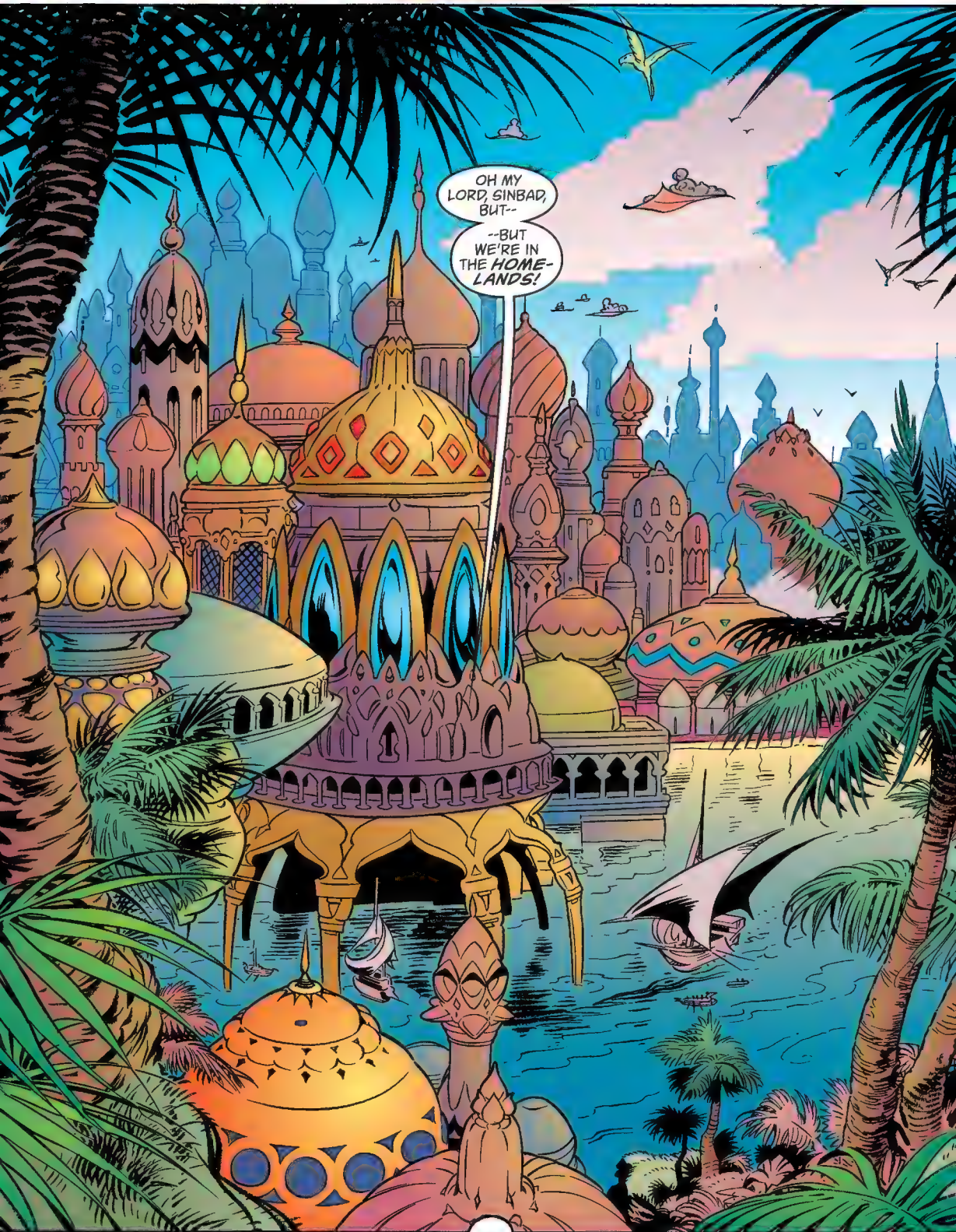
WE SEEM TO BE GOING PRETTY DEEP.



AND NOW, GREAT KING, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO THE TRUE BAGHDAD.

BUT--





OH MY LORD, SINBAD, BUT-

--BUT WE'RE IN THE HOME-LANDS!





PRECISELY SO, SIRRAH.

BAGHDAD IS FAR REMOVED FROM THE CURRENT EXTENT OF THE ADVERSARY'S EXCURSIONS. WE HAVE MONTHS STILL, OR EVEN YEARS, PERHAPS TO FORTIFY IT.

WE'LL MAKE A GOOD STAND HERE.

MESSAGES, SIRRAH.

SOMEDAY AS ALLAH WILLS IT, WE ALL MAY HAVE TO MOVE OVER PERMANENTLY TO YOUR WORLD AND BURN THE GATE BEHIND US.

BUT NOT YET.

SO YOU'RE NOT REALLY REFUGEES.

WE MAY BE, IN A FUTURE NONE BUT THE ALMIGHTY CAN SEE.

BUT, WHEN WE'RE FORCED TO GO, IT WILL BE IN A MORE ORDERLY FASHION THAN THE WAY YOUR PEOPLE SLOUCHED AND STRAGGLED OVER THE YEARS TO THE NEW WORLD.

BUT ENOUGH OF SUCH THINGS FOR NOW. WE NEED TO SEE TO YOUR DISPOSITION.

I SEE BOTH ALI BABA AND ALADDIN HAVE PETITIONED FOR THE HONOR OF HOSTING YOU TONIGHT.

AND OF COURSE YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME IN MY HUMBLE ESTATES.

ANY PREFERENCES?

UH-I'M QUITE OVERWHELMED.





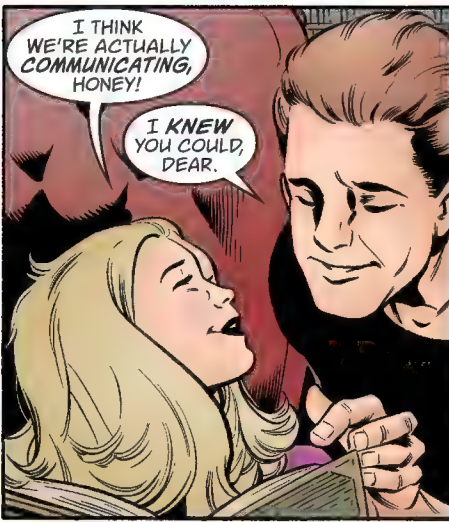
WE'LL...FIND YOU IN...  
APARTMENT, BUT...WE  
NEED TO...GARDEN ANY  
IMPORTANT...SKILLS  
YOU...DEPLETE.



IN ORDER TO...FIT YOU  
UNDER THE...PROFOUND  
JOB.

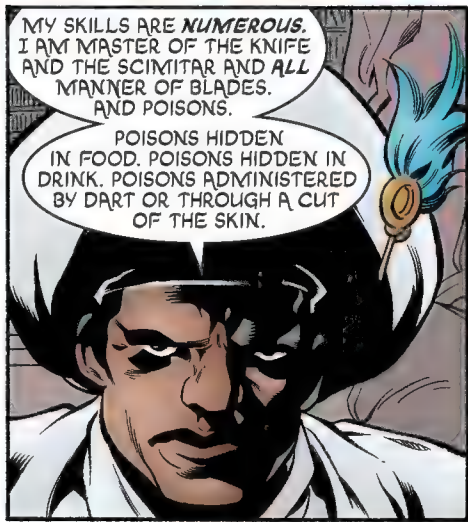
SKILLS?

TALENTS,  
YES!



I THINK  
WE'RE ACTUALLY  
COMMUNICATING,  
HONEY!

I KNEW  
YOU COULD,  
DEAR.



MY SKILLS ARE *NUMEROUS*.  
I AM MASTER OF THE KNIFE  
AND THE SCIMITAR AND ALL  
MANNER OF BLADES.  
AND POISONS.

POISONS HIDDEN  
IN FOOD. POISONS HIDDEN  
IN DRINK. POISONS ADMINISTERED  
BY DART OR THROUGH A CUT  
OF THE SKIN.

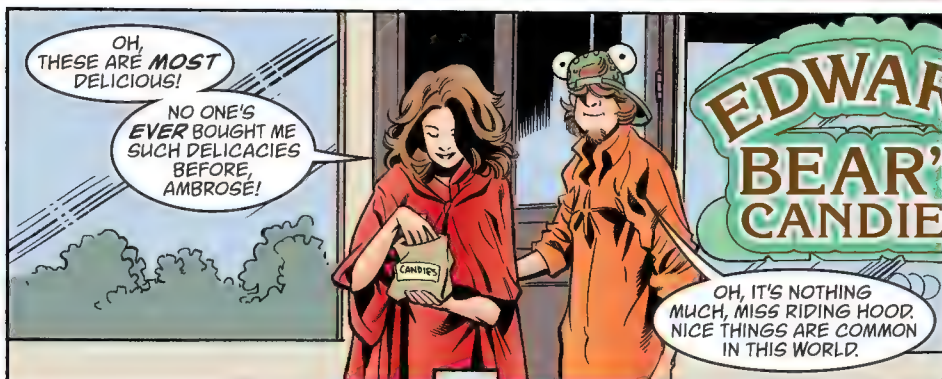
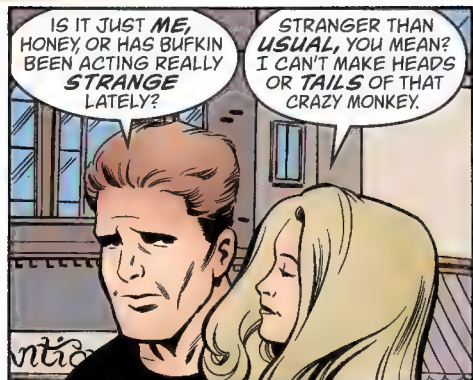
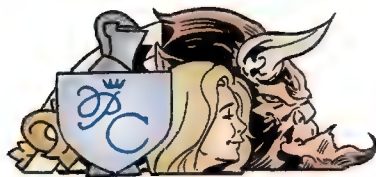


AND OF  
*STRANGLING*,  
EITHER WITH A  
CORD OR WITH  
MY BARE  
HANDS.

HOLD IT!  
HOLD IT! TOO  
*FAST!* I  
CAN'T--

WHAT DID HE SAY,  
HONEY? DID IT SOUND  
MORE LIKE SIKKIYUN  
OR SAYYARAN?









PLEASE DON'T TRY TO DIMINISH YOUR GALLANT ACTS. SMALL COURTESIES ARE OFTEN MORE OF A BLESSING THAN GREAT DEEDS.

AND WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO START CALLING ME RED, OR EVEN RIDE, WHICH BLUE LIKES TO CALL ME? AREN'T WE FRIENDS?

UHM--WELL, BLUE DID ASK ME TO BE YOUR FRIEND.

WE'LL REALLY BE ABLE TO GO UP TO THE FARM AND VISIT HIM SOON?

SURE. THE VERY NEXT TIME I GET TO DRIVE THE SUPPLY TRUCK UP THERE.

THE NEXT FEW DAYS WILL BE BUSY FOR YOU, THOUGH. YOUR APARTMENT'S FINALLY OPENED UP AND WE'LL BE MOVING YOU OUT OF THE WOODLAND GUEST SUITE TOMORROW.

I DON'T REALLY HAVE ALL THAT MUCH TO MOVE, THOUGH.

THAT WILL CHANGE OVER TIME.

GOOD EVENING, MR. BUG DRINKER.

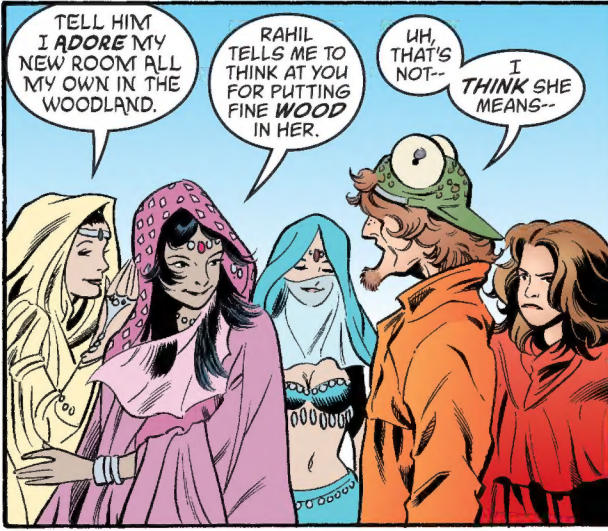
=ULP=

HOW ARE YOU LEAPING THIS FINE PERISCOPE?

I--UH-- THAT IS TO SAY--

I'M DOING VERY WELL, MISS SAFIYA. THANK YOU FOR ASKING.





TELL HIM I **ADORE** MY NEW ROOM ALL MY OWN IN THE WOODLAND.

RAHIL TELLS ME TO THINK AT YOU FOR PUTTING FINE **WOOD** IN HER.

UH, THAT'S NOT--

I **THINK** SHE MEANS--



JUST TELL HER SHE'S WELCOME.

GOOD BYE, GOOD SETTLE MAN. WE HOPE TO **RIVER** YOU AGAINST SOON.

UH, GOOD NIGHT, LADIES.



WELL?

PARDON ME?



I SUPPOSE YOU'D LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT IF I DRESSED LIKE THEM, PARADING AROUND IN MY **BLOOMERS**?

OH, NO! I'D NEVER LOOK AT YOU!

I MEAN I WASN'T **LOOKING** AT THEM THE WAY YOU THINK!



AND YOU'D NEVER LOOK LIKE THEM!

WAIT! I DIDN'T MEAN--

OH NEVER MIND!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING, DO YOU?



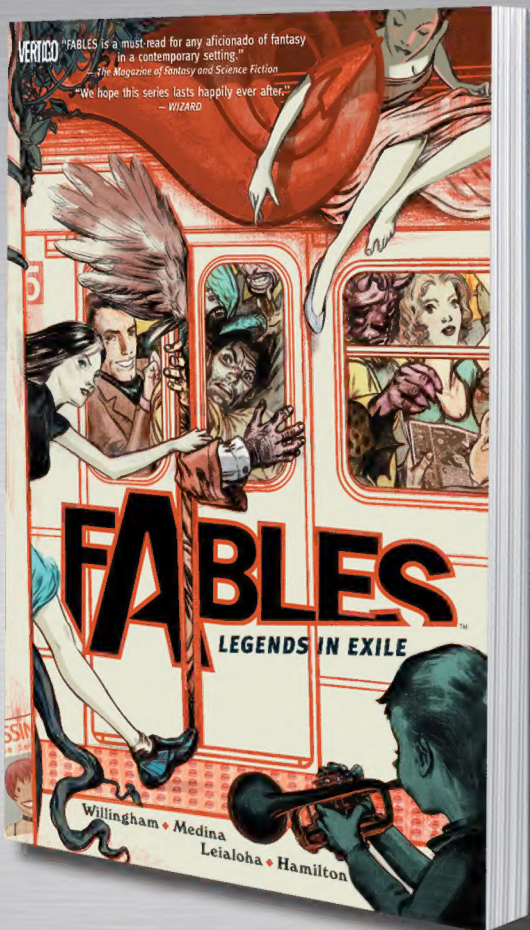
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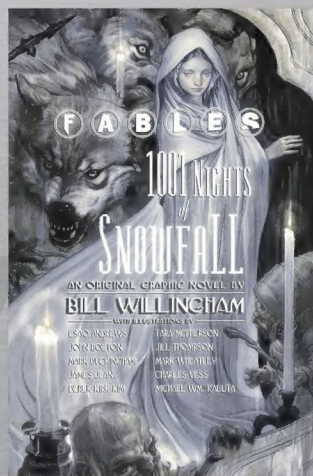
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FABLES VOL. 6:  
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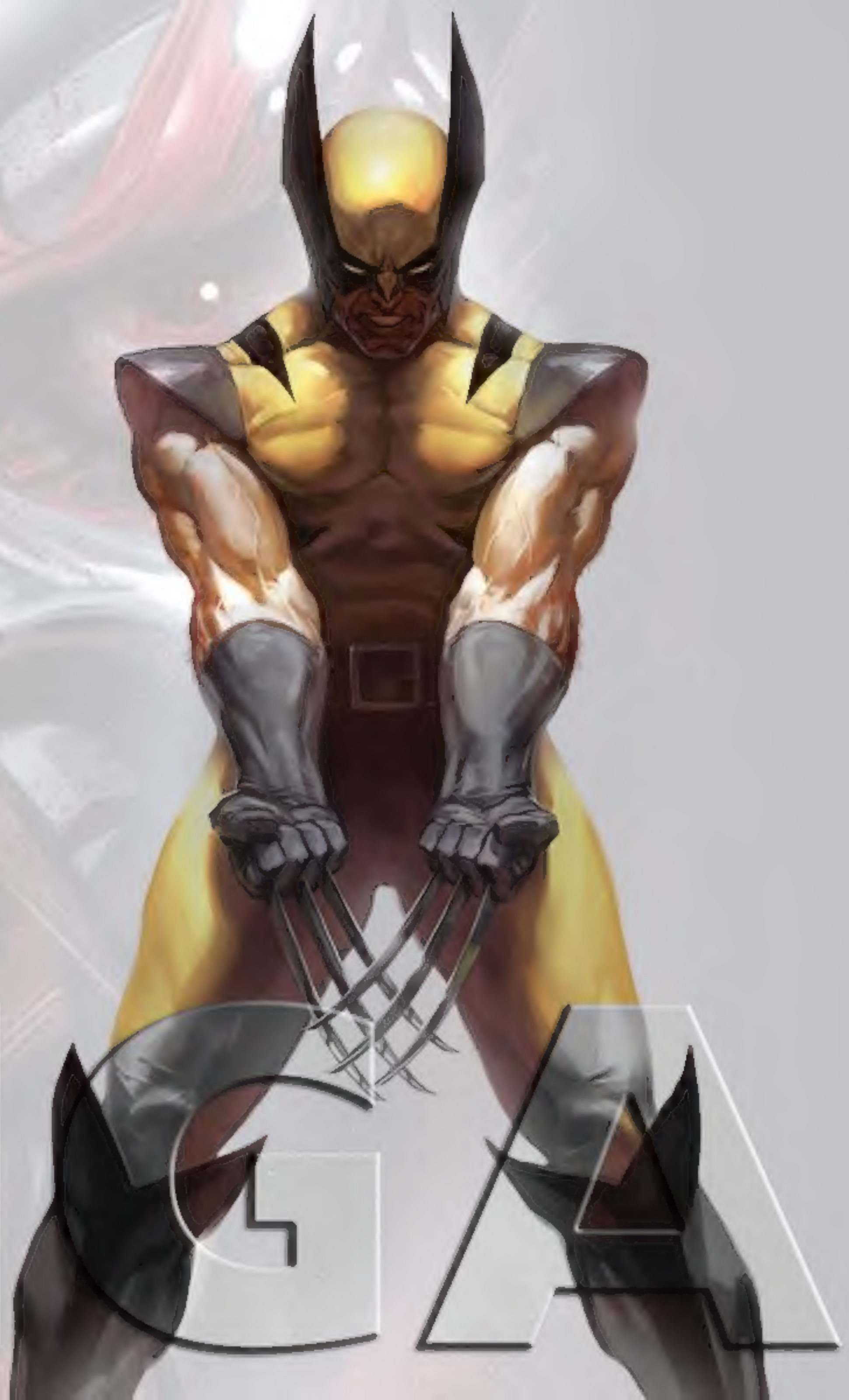
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